The Strange Case of Dr. Lecter and Mr. Graham

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The Strange Case of Dr. Lecter and Mr. Graham

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Summary

A Hannibal retelling of Robert Louis Stevenson's The Strange Case of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde. Part of a larger series in which classic works of Gothic literature are recast with Hannibal characters.

Notes

Each story in this series stands alone. They do not need to be read in any particular order.

Hannibal Lecter: Dr. Jekyll
Will Graham: Mr. Hyde
Beverly Katz: Mr. Utterson
Jack Crawford: Mr. Enfield
Frederick Chilton: Mr. Lanyon

The twist in the original story is changed a bit. In this version, Dr. Lecter and Mr. Graham are two separate people, each with their own dual personalities.

Chapter 1

The early sun poured in through the dirty factory windows. It danced along the beakers of the laboratory within, illuminating multi-colored liquids and crystalline salts. Dr. Hannibal Lecter leaned over them, scribbling in his ledger. Again he had stayed up all night monitoring the activities of various chemicals and jotting down any ideas that sprang into his thoughts; ideas that his colleagues would simply shake their heads at in their ignorant stagnant minds. Dr. Lecter believed himself to be a prodigy in an age of enlightenment, marching forward to the 20th century with his eyes wide open. His fellow scientists accused him of being an alchemist, an anachronistic heretic whose work belonged back in the medieval era in which it was debunked, along with witchcraft and divination. Now he worked alone, aside from the lab assistant he had recently acquired.

His shoulders ached from his bent posture. He stretched his lean back muscles and rotated his neck. He didn't hear the man approach. The silent figure stood in his periphery, still as ice. When Dr. Lecter spotted him he didn't turn his head. He only sniffed and twitched his prominent lips in disdain over the interruption.

"I haven't readied the new supply just yet," he said in a dismissive tone. "I will summon you when I choose. Don't forget that you are working for me."

He heard a sharp chuckle and realized the man was closer to him now, without his even noticing that he moved. He turned to face him.

"Oh, it's you." he said, recognizing the handsome young man that stood before him. Then astonishment came over his face. "How did you…?"

"It doesn't matter, Dr. Lecter," the man replied, his voice low and steady. A playful smirk crept at the corners of his mouth.

"I'd say it matters," Lecter remarked. "I insist upon maintaining meticulous control…"

"You see, that's your problem, Dr. Lecter," the man scoffed, removing his jacket and tossing it over one of Lecter's workspaces. "You are too controlled."

The doctor eyed the act of disregard and glared at him.

"I'm not entirely sure I desire your company at the moment."

"Is that so?" he said, inching closer. "I'm under the impression that you enjoy my charming company."

Lecter examined the man, stepping back a bit as he drew near. He was quite charming. The way he wore his curly hair pushed back from his face, his lips ever-smirking in cheeky nonchalance, the unctuous drawl of his voice.

“Yes, well, I am quite tired. I’ve stayed up all night procuring many items that may be of interest to you,” Lecter said, turning away with simulated indifference.

“I’ve procured items that may be of interest to you,” the young man teased. “I’ve left several parcels of meat in your kitchen. Perhaps you shall throw a dinner party. I know how you do so love your whimsical galas.”

“Perhaps, perhaps not,” Lecter sniffed. “Either way you will not come to me uninvited. I do not tolerate rudeness, even from you.”

The young man darted toward him and grabbed the doctor by the back of the neck, turning his head to face him. Lecter cried out, eyes wide. He stared back at the glowering man, unsure of himself. The man’s face again relaxed into a flippant smirk and he laughed. Then he pushed up against Lecter and kissed him on the mouth.

“Will!” Lecter gasped, putting his hands against him. The young man grimaced, rolled his eyes and then turned Lecter toward his table and bent him over it with his hand wrapped around his neck. Lecter’s face pressed into his ledger.

“Let’s get a few things straight,” the young man droned. He rubbed his groin up against Lecter’s ass and smiled when he heard him moan. “First off, you will call me Mr. Graham. Secondly, I am not that sniveling little guinea pig of yours. You will not give me orders. When I am here, I am in charge.”

Lecter felt the swell of Mr. Graham’s bulge against the cleft of his ass. He felt his own cock stir in response. It dawned on him that perhaps he didn’t want to resist this man. He was not very different from himself; confident, tenacious, articulate. But he was also everything that, had he not been restrained by his blasted Victorian sensibilities, he wished to attain; hedonistic, selfish, and completely unscrupulous.

“What say you?” Graham asked, rubbing himself against Dr. Lecter.

“I understand, Mr. Graham,” the doctor croaked. He shuddered when he felt the young man’s cold hands reach around and unbutton the front of his trousers then pull them down along with his underwear.

“Let’s test that theory,” Graham sneered and pushed himself inside of Lecter.

The doctor groaned and closed his eyes. It was humiliating to be subjected to the whims of someone who he previously thought beneath him. But at the same time he was filled with desire for that subjugation. He pushed back into Graham’s thrusts and grasped the opposite edge of his laboratory table.

“I come and go as I please, Dr. Lecter,” Graham snarled, fucking the man until he heard the noises he most enjoyed hearing: pain and fear. “And you will make sure I am pleased, won’t you?”

Dr. Lecter nodded vigorously and moaned, “Yes, Mr. Graham.”

Jack Crawford stood over the exposed corpse, shaking his head in disgust. The woman had been stripped of her clothes and hung by her ankles from a rope pulley. Her blood pooled on the factory floor, spreading out in a round deep red slick of lacquer. Chunks of her flesh and organs had been pulled from her like from a slaughtered pig.

“What kind of a monster would do something like this?” He asked himself aloud. “And what in God’s name is he doing with the parts he took from her?”

In all of his days at Scotland Yard he had never witnessed such butchery. He stepped out into the sunlight, leaving the corpse to be taken to the morgue. He’d looked at it long enough for one day. He turned his rounded face upward to inhale fresh air. The light of day made him squint for a moment, but when his vision returned to him he saw an old friend standing on the sidewalk in front of him.

She wore a fetching white and powder-blue striped dress with a fashionable bustle and large silk-covered buttons up the front of her collared waistcoat. On her head was pinned a small jaunty top hat in matching blue silk and adorned with white feathers. Her dark hair was pinned up in flouncy curls.

“Beverly Katz,” Jack announced in a bemused tone. He took her hand and kissed it. Her almond-shaped eyes squinted pleasantly when she smiled. “You look splendid, as always.”

“Chief Inspector Jack Crawford,” she greeted him. “You look as though you've stepped out from the mouth of hell.”

“I believe I may have,” Jack grimaced.

“I understand you have been faced with a most ghastly murder scene,” she said, when he offered her his arm. She accepted it with a gloved hand and walked beside him. “Might I offer my services?”

Jack shook his head and told her, “That is nothing but banal grotesquery. Nothing that would be suitable for the talents of London’s most esteemed lady detective.”

“And what are my talents most suited for?”

Jack laughed and tilted his head toward her, a gleam in his eye, “Intrigue, fraud, scandal, convoluted plots.”

“Am I wrong if I wish to expand my horizons?”

“I’m afraid there is nothing to expand anyone’s horizons in that building,” Jack answered. “Monsters leave no trace of humanity, and therefore can only be caught when they expose themselves, usually in the most mundane of fashions.”

“All right, you’ve dissuaded me,” Beverly agreed.

“That’s good, because I may actually have a proposition more suited for you.”

“I’m listening,” she replied.

They walked along the sidewalk and Jack turned them around the corner so it became clear to Beverly that he was leading her somewhere specific.

“A little more than a week ago, I was walking through this neighborhood that we are coming upon right now. It was very late, for I had been held up by paperwork in my office. As I walked I saw a young gentleman coming in my direction. He was quite handsome, superbly dressed, seemingly out of place on this side of the street. I was just about to tip my hat to the dapper man when suddenly an urchin darted through the street and bumped directly into him.”

Jack came to a stop to show they had arrived at the exact location he was indicating.

“It was quite on accident of course, and warranting no more than a head shake. I believe I may have even smiled at the man expecting him to laugh and ruffle the boy’s hair. What he did instead took me by surprise.”

Beverly looked up at Jack, curious.

“He took him by the arm and struck him, very hard, across the ear. Boxed his ear, I would even say, several times. The boy fell to the ground crying and holding it in pain. Then… to my shock he began to kick him.”

“Dreadful,” Beverly remarked.

“The boy’s parents came running forward, upset, as you can imagine. The gentleman, if I can even call him that, tried to hurry away. I caught him and a crowd began to gather. They wanted his hide! They even called for his arrest.”

“Did you arrest him?”

“No, for you see he charmed his way out of it. I have never seen a face such as this. He smiled! A most inappropriate self-satisfied grin! His eyebrows raised in cheek, his body language lackadaisical. He had the confidence and certainty of a man who must have had great exceptions made for him and his boyish good looks. I was livid, of course.”

“Of course,” Beverly responded with a smirk.

Jack continued, “He said to the crowd ‘If you choose to make capital out of this accident, I am naturally helpless. No gentleman but wishes to avoid a scene. Name your figure.'”

“The nerve!” Beverly gasped, “What a spoiled brat this man is.”

Jack grunted.

“Mmm, well it worked,” he said. “He offered the parents 100 pounds if they let him be, and they agreed. That’s when he went in there.”

Jack pointed up at what looked like an old factory. It was a sinister block of building that thrust forward its gable on the street. It was two stories high; with tall dirty windows, a door on the lower story and bore the marks of prolonged negligence. The door, which was equipped with neither bell nor knocker, was blistered and stained.

“And came out again with a checkbook with which he wrote a note for 100 pounds. I demanded to know his name and he told me it was Mr. Graham. I let him go, but after I looked at the check itself I realized my mistake.”

“What mistake?”

“The check bore the name of Dr. Hannibal Lecter,” Jack explained.

“The philanthropist and scientist?” Beverly asked.

“One and the same. I also suddenly remembered that this building right here is connected via passageway to Dr. Lecter’s fine house on the other side. He uses it as a laboratory.”

“Mr. Graham stole the checkbook?” she asked.

“No, that would make things very simple wouldn’t it?” Jack asked, leading Beverly onward again. “I spoke to Dr. Lecter, who is a good friend of mine, about the incident and he said that Mr. Graham was under his patronage.”

“For what cause?”

“I have no idea. As you say, a most miserable spoiled brat that Mr. Graham is. And Dr. Lecter being such a pillar of his community.”

“A relative, perhaps?” she asked.

“I feel that he would have mentioned it. Instead he avoided the subject. No, I’m more inclined to believe that there is some nefarious scheme afoot.”

Beverly pursed her lips.

“Mr. Graham is blackmailing Dr. Lecter.”

“My fears exactly. I cannot imagine over what,” Jack said, his voice growing low, “For Dr. Lecter is a man of impeccable reputation, but he has him on something. Dr. Lecter has a solicitor by the name of Frederick Chilton. When I mentioned Mr. Graham’s name he seemed quite aware of him. He won’t admit anything to me, most likely because he knows that I am an officer of the law and he doesn’t want me to interfere with his client.”

“That’s where I come in,” Beverly said.

“I know you will be discreet when handling the affairs of my esteemed friend,” Jack declared. “Use your wit and your charm and find information about this Mr. Graham, and I will be in your debt.”

Chapter 2

“If you are interested in philanthropy, my dear Miss Katz, then there is no other acquaintance I can more highly recommend than Dr. Hannibal Lecter.”

Beverly walked alongside Frederick Chilton through the park near his office. He walked with a silver-topped cane, which he often leaned on for support as though injured, but Beverly noted that he occasionally leaned on a different side, and sometimes didn’t appear to use it at all.

“Oh yes, I am quite aware of the esteemed Dr. Lecter,” she replied. “I have often hoped to secure an invite to one of his famed charity dinners.”

“No one in London hosts a dinner party with as much refinery and precision,” Chilton responded, then added in a proud tone, “I myself have attended four. They are always a grand affair.”

“You must be a good friend of his indeed,” Beverly said. “I am envious.”

Chilton glanced at her, his chest puffing a bit at her remark. He smiled in satisfaction.

“I daresay I am one of his closest friends.”

Beverly walked nearer to him and Chilton offered his arm to her. She took it and gave him a look of admiration.

“As it happens,” Chilton added in a casual tone, “Dr. Lecter is hosting another charity dinner in a week’s time. I have no one to accompany me at present. Would you do me the honors?”

“Oh, the honor would be mine, of course!” Beverly declared. “Thank you very much for the invitation.”

“Splendid,” Chilton said with a smirk.

Beverly knew instantly that finding Chilton’s good graces was a coup to her investigation. He was a chatty sort, always willing to reveal the depth of his connection with Hannibal Lecter at the slightest prodding. When she accompanied him to Lecter’s house on the night of the party, he had already identified several of their mutual acquaintances and Beverly hoped that Mr. Graham was in attendance so that she might have an excuse to ask about him.

She wore an elegant scarlet gown with black lace at her bosom and capped sleeves. Chilton in his white shirt, waistcoat and bow-tie and black cape, led her inside by his arm. She was prepared to gush over the affair of the dinner party, and perhaps secure an invitation in the future. When they entered the dining hall, she found that the gasp that escaped her lips was fully genuine.

The table was laid with crystal and silver. Bountiful bowls of dessert fruits and flowers were set at intervals along with salt cellars, cruet-stands, and decanters of sherry. An enticing sidebar stood at the foot of the table laden with quenelles, croquettes, savory trifles, dishes of herbed smelts, and anchovy and sardine toast points. The smell of the room was beyond enticing. Florals and citruses mingled with meat and spices. Beverly almost pulled herself away from Chilton to help herself at the sidebar where stylish gentlemen and ladies raved about the food they were sampling. She managed to control herself long enough to be introduced to Dr. Hannibal Lecter.

The man was the most dashing of them all. Beverly admired his audacious lack of uniformity with the other gentlemen who played it safe in black and white. He wore a waistcoat as scarlet as her dress, and a black ascot, a charming old-fashioned touch on an otherwise thoroughly-modern looking man. She found herself quite taken with him when he smiled and kissed her hand.

“An unexpected guest,” he said in an alluring tone, “But welcome.”

Beverly finally made it to the sidebar and began enjoying the hors d'oeuvres. She enjoyed them so much she almost forgot why she had come. She glanced around the room, trying to find the man that Crawford had described as handsome and superbly dressed. None were so superbly dressed as Dr. Lecter, nor were there any as handsome. In fact, she found them all rather dull-looking.

Her eyes eventually fell upon a man standing alone in one corner. He was very under-dressed for the occasion in a simple light-colored tweed jacket and tie. The tie, she noted was crooked. He was the youngest man in the room and had a pretty sort of boyish face that was covered by wiry spectacles and disheveled hair that fell into his eyes. He had no plate of food in his hand but merely stared at nothing in particular, a sullen expression on his face.

“What an odd little man,” she remarked to Chilton, nodding in his direction, “Most out-of-place in this gathering.”

“Yes,” Chilton replied with disapproval. “That is Will Graham, Dr. Lecter’s lab assistant.”

“Graham!” Beverly said, and then descried aloud unintentionally, “He isn’t dapper at all.”

Chilton laughed and responded, “No, he isn’t; a quite unsociable character. I’ve seen him on several occasions and we’ve barely exchanged more than a few words. I can’t for the life of me understand what Dr. Lecter sees in him.”

This cannot be the same man, Beverly thought. Jack was not one to throw around compliments regarding appearances. She also remembered his referring to a certain charm and cheeky attitude. Perhaps the man Jack met gave a false name, and Mr. Graham was someone altogether different.

“He is good friends with the doctor?”

Chilton leaned closer and murmured, “Apart from being his lab assistant, Will is also his ward. He has ordered that I allow the boy full access to his funds and even power of

attorney."

That definitely sounds like blackmail, she thought. Maybe this was the same Graham, although it seemed impossible.

The guests were invited to sit for dinner and Chilton pulled out a chair for Beverly. She sat and removed her kid gloves.

"Ladies and gentlemen," Dr. Lecter addressed, standing at the head of the table. He was all poise as he raised a conical glass of sherry. "Please enjoy the food, but do not forget why we are here tonight. The London Children's Hospital is very much in need of your donations. And of course, any and all leftovers from tonight's dinner will be delivered to local shelters."

The guests clapped in admiration. Beverly noticed that Will Graham merely sat back in his chair, staring at the soup that was placed in front of him.

"Therefore, do not forget," Lecter said, an impish grin on his face, "That every bite you take depletes their supply."

"Oh, Dr. Lecter!" one woman scolded him as the company laughed.

"Forgive me," the doctor said, taking his seat, "I can't resist the occasional ribbing. Please, eat!"

Beverly didn't have to be encouraged to do so. The savory steam filled her delighted nose. The footmen set down plates of lemon wedges to accompany the soup.

"Mock turtle soup," Lecter announced.

"This is delicious, Dr. Lecter," Chilton said. "Tell me, what meat do you use in your mock turtle soup?"

"Only one thing can be certain," Lecter replied, eyes gleaming. "It is not turtle."

Chilton and the rest chuckled but a harsh guffaw escaped Will Graham's throat. He looked down quickly when Beverly glanced at him. She noticed that Lecter smiled at the young man, rotating his jaw a bit.

The soup was followed by matelote, stewed fish in a wine sauce. Then an entrée of Hâtelets, tiny roasted larks skewered with vegetables served with squat, bowl-shaped glasses of fine German hock. Then a footman brought forth veal breast rolled and stuffed which he sliced at the sideboard. It was accompanied by Bordeaux in beveled crystal glasses. Between each course mint and fruit sorbets were served to refresh the palate. The debonair host chatted up each of his guests with unparalleled finesse. Finally, the ice was served with delicate edible flowers and brandy.

When the meal was finished, the ladies excused themselves to the drawing room while the gentlemen enjoyed coffee and cigars. Beverly had nothing to discuss with these women, and wished to remain with Chilton, but propriety intervened. She was surprised and relieved to

see that Will Graham excused himself as well and entered a small parlor beside the drawing room. Beverly followed him.

Will sat in the leather armchair and leaned forward as Dr. Lecter's dogs scurried up to him. He pulled a handkerchief out of his pocket and fed them a few scraps of food he had secreted away at dinner. Beverly saw him smile and appear happy for the first time that night.

"Mr. Graham, I presume?" she greeted him, and he seemed startled. He began to rise to his feet.

"No please," she gestured, and he returned to his seat.

Beverly waited for him to ask her name, and when he didn't she finally said, "I am Beverly Katz."

"Oh!" he realized that he may have seemed rude. "I'm sorry. It's very nice to meet you."

Beverly sat on the couch next to his chair and was keenly aware that her presence was making him uncomfortable.

"I see you have your own charity involving leftovers," she needled.

Will nodded.

"Yes, well… I don't have much of an appetite tonight."

Beverly had noticed that he barely touched his food, keeping mostly to the fish and vegetables.

"I'm sure they're glad of it," Beverly replied, leaning forward and petting one of the dogs. He licked her hand and she chuckled. She thought she caught another smile pass over Will's face.

"I understand you are Dr. Lecter's lab assistant?" she asked.

"Uh, yes," he answered. He let his glasses slide down on his nose so that the rim of them blocked his eyes. Beverly felt the urge to push them back up, but resisted. "I help him with his notes, and… run errands, gather equipment and ingredients."

"Remarkable study, chemistry," she told him. One of the dogs jumped up on the couch next to her and she let him place his head on her lap. "What substances are made up of, at their most quantum level."

"What we are made up of," Will added. "Everything we are, our behavior, our reactions to each other, whether we recoil in disgust or yearn for embrace, it is all dependent on chemicals."

"Are we so simple?"

“Not simple at all,” he corrected. “We still don’t know exactly what combination of differing factors creates the end result, which is of course, an infinite pantheon of personalities.”

“Is that Dr. Lecter’s chief interest?” Beverly asked, “The effects of chemicals on personality?”

“Y-yes,” Will answered, wiping his hands on the handkerchief. “He believes that behavior may be controlled if one can only create the correct balance of elements.”

“What a boon to society such a discovery would be! To eliminate negative behavior and enhance the positive simply by administering…”

“A serum…” Will muttered.

“Precisely!” she replied. She paused when she saw Will’s disgruntled expression. “You do not agree?”

Will shook away the look on his face and attempted to register a more benign one.

“It depends,” he said, scratching the dog at his feet behind the ears. “It is also possible that condescending to whatever state of being results could destroy the balance of the soul.”

“Is the soul a matter of chemistry?” she teased.

“Why not?” Will asked, finally pushing his glasses up and looking at her. “Everything else is.”

They spoke easily from then on, of souls and the people who carried them. Beverly found herself liking the strange man very much. He was not as sociable and gracious as his benefactor, and one couldn’t really call him warm, but there was something about him that was deeply sincere. He lacked all form of affectation. Most of all, he seemed to have respect for her as an individual, and listened to her opinions with undivided attention.

When she heard the men enter the drawing room to join the ladies in disembarking for the evening, they stood together to say farewell. She reached forward and touched Will’s arm, and he pulled back.

“You recoil,” she pointed out. “I hope not in disgust.”

“No,” he assured her. “I’m just… not fond of being touched. I’m sorry. I very much enjoyed visiting with you, Miss Katz.”

“Likewise,” she replied with a genuine smile.

When she returned to Frederick Chilton she had convinced herself that whoever Jack met on the street that night was not Will Graham. It was still a bit of a mystery as to why Dr. Lecter had given his lab assistant such access to his wealth.

Perhaps he loves him, Beverly thought. It didn’t seem too far from the realm of possibility. Will struck her as a very tender sort of person, and love felt closer to reality than scheming

blackmail.

“Please, Dr. Lecter,” Will stammered as he followed the man through his laboratory. “I need to stop. I’ve changed on my own, and that shouldn’t be.”

“Yes, I noticed, if you recall,” the doctor responded coldly.

“I can’t control what he does,” Will said in a small voice. “He killed someone.”

“The details of that you have failed to relate to me,” Lecter chided. “An inextricable requirement of our contract was that you would inform me of everything Mr. Graham does.”

“Must you take such pleasure in this horror? Is it not enough that you prepared the meat he brought home, and served it to innocent people?”

“When it is enough, I will say it is enough.”

“You are sick!” Will cried.

“I would not speak to me that way, if I were you. You know that all I have to do is call Scotland Yard and have you taken away for murder.”

“That wasn’t me.”

“Who would believe you?” Dr. Lecter snarled. He turned on Will and grabbed him by the hair. “I own you, do you hear me? You belong to me. You depend on me. Without daily dosages your body would tear itself apart.”

Will grasped Lecter’s arm and lowered his eyes.

“Please, don’t make me do it again,” he said, voice shaking. “I can’t bear it.”

“Not only will you bear it, but you will obey your contract to the letter and give me all of the sordid little details of Mr. Graham’s adventures. Yes, because it pleases me. Yes, because I am sick. I care not what you think.”

“I would rather die,” Will whispered.

Dr. Lecter tugged his hair and slammed his head down on the laboratory table. Will groaned as Lecter led him stumbling and nearly unconscious to a propped-up gurney covered in straps. He pushed the young man up against it and buckled him down. When Will came to, he struggled against the straps.

“Don’t do this!” he cried.

Dr. Lecter opened a case and pulled out a prepared syringe. He stuck it into Will’s neck and pushed down the plunger. Then he stood back and watched.

Will screamed in pain. The veins on his neck throbbed and turned purple for an instant, and his body convulsed into spasms. Dr. Lecter reached out and pulled the glasses off of the young man's face and put them aside. When his assistant grew still, his head hanging, Dr. Lecter bit his lip and steadied his breath.

The young man lifted his head, eyes turning upward in a menacing expression. A quivering grin spread over his face.

"Mr. Graham…" Lecter said, smiling back at him.

"We can't keep meeting like this, Dr. Lecter," Graham sneered. "People will say we're in love."

Lecter hurriedly unbuckled the straps and released him. Graham strode forward, cracking his neck and smoothing back his hair. He looked down at his clothes and sighed.

"Bring me something worth wearing," he ordered.

The doctor gestured to the clothes he had laid out for him. Graham looked at them and extended his arm, waving with his hand. Lecter brought them to him as Graham began to strip off the jacket and tie. He smirked as Lecter watched him undress.

"I think you do love me," he said. "I treat you so poorly, and yet you keep bringing me back."

Lecter shifted.

"Tell me about the murder."

Will pulled on the pants and waistcoat that Lecter brought him. He popped up his shirt collar and wrapped a tie around his neck. He grasped the ends of the tie as he walked toward the doctor.

"The woman was rude," he said, leaning forward with a maniacal grin on his face.

Lecter laughed.

"I knocked her over the head with a brick. You should have heard the sound it made. You should have heard the sounds she made when she came to, hanging by her ankles and naked, thrashing about like a fish on a hook."

Lecter's breathing grew rapid. He leaned into Graham as he collided with him, grasping his hand and holding it out as if he were about to waltz with him.

He spun him around and cackled, "She moaned like a cow when I cut her open. The blood poured out, thick and red—like that lovely claret you served at dinner; that was very nice."

"Don't stop," Dr. Lecter murmured in elation.

"I chopped the meat away from her while she still breathed," Graham continued, dipping Dr. Lecter a bit. "And then I cut out her heart while it was still beating."

Lecter kissed him hard on the mouth, pressing up against him eagerly.

“She was delicious, by the way,” Lecter replied, “If I do say so myself.”

“Yes,” Graham said with a broad, toothy smile. “Like the dutiful husband I have brought home the meat, and as my dutiful wife you prepared it splendidly.”

Lecter rolled his eyes and pulled away. Graham caught him by the arm and dragged him back into the dance, kissing him so hard that it hurt. Lecter tugged on Graham’s hair and bit his lip, pulling it into his mouth. The young man released a pleasurable growl and pushed the doctor against the table.

“You’re going to make me want to undress again,” he said.

“You must tell me how you managed to change without the serum,” Lecter insisted.

Graham kissed the doctor’s throat and unbuttoned his pants. He reached inside and fondled him.

“It’s simple,” he replied as he bit at the slope between Lecter’s neck and shoulder. “I am strong, and he is weak.”

Chapter 3

Another body was found in a London factory. Jack Crawford's mind reeled as he stared at it. A man was hung by his ankles and bled dry. He was sliced open from cock to collar, his bowels pulled out and hanging to the ground and several organs removed.

"I'm going mad," Jack said as he walked away. He knew the people of London would hear about what was happening and panic. He was not equipped to handle something like that.

He questioned everyone living in the buildings nearby. There were no witnesses. One woman in an apartment down the street said that the only thing she heard was two men arguing in the early morning.

"They were shouting at each other," she said. "I couldn't make out much of it but I heard one yelling 'get back inside!'"

"Did you see what they looked like?" Jack asked.

"I looked down at the sidewalk and only saw one man. He appeared young and rich. I could only see the top of his head, which he was grabbing as though he had a tremendous headache. Then he walked away. The other must have gone in somewhere."

Jack excused the woman and noticed that Beverly Katz was standing nearby, listening to the account. He ordered an officer to ask the landlord of the building if anyone entered from that side of the street near daybreak.

"Speaking of young, rich men causing commotions," he said to Beverly. "Have you discovered anything about your case?"

"I was able to attend one of Dr. Lecter's dinner parties," she answered with a broad smile.

"Then I am envious," Jack laughed.

"I've never eaten so much delicious food in my life!" she confessed.

"And what of Mr. Graham? Was he in attendance?"

Beverly pursed her lips and thought for a moment.

"Young, boyish, large low-set eyes, angular nose, mouth that curls up a bit at the edges?"

"That's the man!"

"Glasses, curly hair?"

"Curly hair, yes, but no glasses," Jack replied. "Did you not get to meet him?"

“Oh, I met a Mr. Will Graham,” Beverly said, stepping closer to Jack. “And his physical description may be apt, but his temperament is not at all what you described. I am quite confused.”

“I daresay he could be charming,” Jack warned. “Perhaps the devilish temperament only comes out on occasion.”

“But he wasn’t charming, nor was he richly dressed. He was quite shy and reserved, and I struggled to even imagine him being violent.”

“I have never met a better judge of character than you, Beverly,” Jack responded. “But the man I saw that night was wicked. I could feel it in my bones.”

Beverly nodded and furrowed her brow.

“I did manage to find out that Will Graham is Dr. Lecter’s lab assistant, who he recently hired. I also discovered, from Frederick Chilton, that he has full access to the doctor’s funds and power-of-attorney.”

“What?” Jack gasped. “Then this is far worse than I feared. He must know something about the doctor that no one can ever hear.”

“I was in the company of Dr. Lecter,” Beverly explained. “He was quite possibly the most charming gentleman I’ve ever encountered. In my experience, men with that level of grace have something to hide.”

“Beverly,” Jack scolded in his formidable baritone. “Hannibal Lecter is my dear friend. His work with charities sets him in a league of his own. If he has committed a grievous sin, it is something from long past, and it should stay in the past.”

“Jack,” she replied, smiling to ease the tension. “You know I am nothing if not discreet.”

“I brought you the tasty bits,” Graham said in jubilation.

Dr. Lecter smiled when he looked over the parcels of organ meat that Graham placed on his kitchen counter.

“These are quite fine. I’m imagining how they will be served as we speak.”

“I hope you will not force me to hide while you throw another dinner party.”

“No,” Dr. Lecter assured him. “In fact, Will is no longer allowed to come out, unless he is in my laboratory.”

He led Graham into the lab and showed him the tall narrow metal cage he had assembled.

Graham bristled.

“That will do for now,” he said, “But you must find a way to eliminate him altogether. I can’t bear to be trapped inside of him any longer.”

“Tell me about the murder,” Lecter insisted.

Graham rolled his eyes but smiled.

“I sliced him open like a trout. I plucked the organs from him as I might pick fruit from a tree.”

Dr. Lecter closed his eyes and tried to imagine it as Graham came up behind him and rubbed his cock against his ass, putting his hand at the doctor’s throat.

“I kept him alive for as long as possible,” Graham continued. “He lived to see his bowels hit the floor.”

The young man began to pull down Lecter’s pants, but the doctor turned around and held up his hand.

“Wait,” he said.

“Don’t tell me to wait,” Graham snarled grabbing Lecter’s hips. “I don’t like waiting.”

“I just want to test something,” Dr. Lecter replied. He reached over the table and lifted a vial of colorful salts.

“What is that?” Graham asked.

“Give it a smell,” Dr. Lecter answered.

Graham sniffed the salts and then reeled backward, his face contorting. He let out a scream and clutched at his head. Then he groaned loudly and fell to his knees. Seconds later a soft whimper emerged from his throat.

“It worked!” Dr. Lecter cried out, laughing and holding up the salt. “It worked!”

He looked down at the man on his hands and knees.

“Will!” he barked.

“No…” Will mourned. “What have you made me do?”

The doctor picked up a syringe of anesthetic and pushed it into Will’s neck.

When Will opened his eyes he felt a heavy feeling in his head. He twisted a bit, overcome with vertigo. When he looked up he saw the floor of the laboratory moving below him. He groaned and put his hands to his head, finding them bound together. Then he realized he was naked. He pulled up to cover himself but he was working against gravity and he fell back down. He hung by his ankles two feet off of the ground. He saw Dr. Lecter standing in front of him, smiling down at his face. The look in his eyes filled him with chills.

“That was a monstrous thing you did, Will,” the doctor purred, clicking his tongue and shaking his head. “That poor man.”

Will wriggled as the doctor came closer. Lecter was moving his eyes over his naked body with unabashed lasciviousness.

“It wasn’t me,” he answered, trembling when he saw that the doctor held a leather strap in his hands. “You know that wasn’t me.”

“Of course it was you, Will,” Dr. Lecter replied, putting his hand on the young man’s belly and caressing it. “It was a part of you that was there all along. That’s how the serum works.”

“No,” Will strained away from his touch. “I would never.”

“Not with those inhibitions of yours,” Lecter went on, running his hand over Will’s naked hip. “But without them, what horrors you unleash.”

“What are you going to do?” he whimpered.

“You feel guilty, don’t you, Will?” Dr. Lecter replied, stretching the strap between his hands.

Will gasped and shuddered.

“You are going to punish me, for what he did?”

“He can’t feel guilty,” Lecter explained. “He can’t be truly punished. But you can.”

“You like what he does!”

“Yes, I do,” Lecter admitted. “But I also believe in justice.”

Will stared down at the floor below him. He could remember every moment of the kill. He could feel his own hands destroying a man’s body and stealing his life away from him. He was sick with shame.

Dr. Lecter maneuvered Will so that his back faced him. Then he stretched out his arm away and brought the strap down hard upon his hide.

Will cried out, lurching forward and twisting. He struck him again, and again, until his skin was swelling into bright pink welts. Will didn’t beg for him to stop. The pain blocked out the memories of what he had done last night. He grit his teeth and tried not to cry.

Lecter stopped beating him and grabbed hold of Will’s bare ass. He bit him hard on his cheek and spread him open, probing him while he sucked on his flesh. He began to lick his asshole and Will squeaked and wriggled from the strange sensation.

Dr. Lecter threw the strap to the side and pulled out a curved linoleum knife. Will spotted it and began to hyperventilate.

“Please…”

“How did you do it Will?” Lecter asked, running the sharp point of the blade over his pale flesh, digging it into his ass cheek until a tiny spot of blood appeared.

Will began to panic and thrash a bit, his cock jumping against his belly.

“Ssh… tell me how did you cut him?”

“He already told you,” Will choked.

“I want to hear it from you. I want to hear it from someone with a touch of shame.”

“He gutted him,” Will replied, tears forming in his eyes.

“First person, please,” Dr. Lecter scraped the blunt edge of the knife over Will’s welts, causing him to twitch.

“I gutted him,” Will said in a small voice.

Dr. Lecter twisted him around again so that he faced him. He ran the blade over Will’s quivering belly.

“Right here?”

“Lower,” Will admitted. He moaned when Dr. Lecter grasped his cock in his hand and lifted it. The blade was cold against his groin.

“Here?”

“Yes,” Will breathed, nearly sobbing. “Please, don’t…”

Doctor Lecter dragged the knife over his pubic area, leaving a thin red trail, beaded with blood. Will screamed and tried desperately not to move.

“To where?”

The young man lifted his head, then dropped it and lifted it again, trying to see the thing that was inflicting so much pain. He felt a stinging strip travel up his belly and in his fearful mind he imagined himself flopping open and spilling his innards onto the floor.

“To the collar!” he cried out.

Dr. Lecter squatted down and stared into Will’s face as he cut him all the way to his collarbone, hand still gripping the young man’s cock. A pretty red line marked his entire front, oozing a small amount of blood.

“But this is nothing like what you inflicted, is it Will?”

“No,” Will whispered.

Lecter pulled him by the hair and kissed him. Then he stood up. He put the knife on the table and Will gasped in relief, shaking all over. The blood began to trickle up his throat and over

his jaw. His back burned from the lashes of the strap.

The doctor grabbed Will by the ass and began to push the boy's cock into his mouth, pulling his cheeks apart and nudging his hole with his fingers.

"Oh God!" Will moaned. His head was spinning.

Dr. Lecter unbuttoned the front of his trousers and pushed himself against Will's face. His hard cock pressed against the young man's lips.

"I am not going to eliminate you, Will," Dr. Lecter growled, grasping Will's hair and forcing himself into his mouth. "For as much as I enjoy the exploits of Mr. Graham, I also enjoy exploiting you."

Will gagged on his cock and whimpered through his nose. Dr. Lecter pulled out and slapped him across the face.

"Open wider," he snarled, and pushed himself inside of his mouth once more. The slurping and muffled crying sounds brought a wicked smile to his face. He continued, "He is so brash and devious, you are so compliant and submissive and deliciously easy to humiliate."

Will obeyed the doctor as best he could, opening his mouth and sucking on him. He moaned around his cock as Lecter pushed his fingers inside of him.

"Of the two natures that contend in the field of your consciousness," Lecter explained in a voice hoarse with lechery. "You are radically both. I must admit that I enjoy them equally."

Chapter 4

“Thank you for inviting me once more,” Beverly said, taking Chilton’s arms as they entered Dr. Lecter’s home. “My life is grander for it.”

Chilton smiled and tapped his cane very lightly as he walked.

“You are most welcome,” he replied. “I am glad to have you in my company.”

Beverly’s mouth began to water before she even came into the dining room. When her eyes fell upon the sidebar, she was practically giddy. Pâtés, tartare, stuffed soft-shell crab! She filled her small plate while the generous host poured champagne.

When she saw the young man enter the room, she did a double-take. It was Will Graham, dressed in an exquisite aubergine and black damask waistcoat and black bowtie. His curls were slicked back from his face and he wore no glasses. Beverly’s jaw dropped. He was devastatingly handsome, and sauntered into the room with a bemused grin on his face, holding his arm at his waist and bowing to the guests. He walked over to the sidebar, plucked a sample of hors d'oeuvre from a dish, and popped it into his mouth.

“Mr. Graham!” Beverly declared. “My, but you look dashing this evening!”

Graham turned to her with a puzzled look and then let his eyes wander over her, particularly the shelf of her bosom; barely concealed by a fringe of small feathers.

“Madame,” he replied, a lopsided smirk creeping over his lips. “Have I had the pleasure?”

“Why of course,” she answered, stunned. “Beverly Katz. We met at a previous dinner.”

“How foolish of me,” Graham said, recognition coming over his face. He reached out and took her hand then brought it to his impish smile and kissed it. He looked up at her with a gleam in his eye. “Of course I remember, Miss Katz.”

Beverly slipped her hand away as if afraid he might bite.

The guests seated themselves at the table when a consommé was served. She noticed that Graham winced a bit when he sat down. Lecter chuckled and Graham shot him an impudent glare.

Well my my, Beverly thought, placing her napkin on her lap.

Côtelettes of tender meat were the entrée, followed by kidneys in an oyster sauce served with room-temperature Bourgogne.

“How fares the drive for the children’s hospital, Dr. Lecter?” Chilton asked.

“Very well,” Lecter replied, dabbing a napkin to his lips. “Thanks to all of your generous contributions, they are able to build a new wing.”

“Your dinners have raised awareness, Doctor,” Chilton continued. “Although I hope you don’t think we are only here for the wonderful food.”

Lecter smiled at him graciously and said, “Anyone with a heart for philanthropy is welcome at my table.”

“Unless they are vegetarian,” Graham cracked, lifting his glass.

The company laughed and Dr. Lecter toasted the young man with a playful smirk.

Beverly found herself watching Will eat. He savored each bite to the last, particularly the red meat. When he realized she was staring at him, he locked eyes with her. He scraped his teeth over his fork and winked.

She shivered. She usually favored brash and flirtatious men, and in other circumstances would have happily flirted back with one so attractive, but his change unnerved her.

Tulip-shaped glasses of Madeira accompanied a decadent cake and then the ladies were excused. She looked over her shoulder at Graham, expecting him to excuse himself as well, but he lit a cigar and leaned back in his chair, smiling contentedly.

She sat in the drawing room and made idle chit-chat with the ladies, but her mind was on the mysterious Will Graham. When the men joined them, she glanced at him and walked into the side parlor. She knelt and petted the dogs. He came in silently and stood behind her. When she noticed him she nearly jumped.

“Hello again, Mr. Graham,” she said, standing.

He came closer to her, his eyes crawling over her bare arms and chest.

“Miss Katz, how did you enjoy dinner?”

“Very much, thank you.”

The dogs came to Graham and he shooed them away with his foot. It was that action more than anything that astonished her. She was at a loss.

“How goes your work with Dr. Lecter?”

Graham sniffed and leaned into her, his head tilted to one side. She could hear his low breathing as he traced the back of a finger up her arm. Goosebumps scattered over her skin.

“I’m sure we can talk about something more interesting,” he murmured in a beguiling tone. He stared at her lips and licked his. “Such as, what an enchanting minx such as yourself is doing on the arm of that obsequious fool Frederick Chilton.”

Beverly was both repulsed and enticed, a muddle of emotions to which she was not accustomed. She craned her neck toward him, nearly brushing her lips against his.

“I thought you didn’t like to be touched,” she whispered.

Graham chuckled.

“Perhaps you have persuaded me,” he replied.

She heard Chilton coming toward the parlor and pulled away.

“Excuse me,” she said, and joined him.

“Another magnificent dinner,” Chilton remarked, leading her away from the house.

“Yes, quite,” she agreed, then added, “Mr. Graham…”

“Oh yes, what a remarkable transformation!” Chilton replied. “I do believe Dr. Lecter is having an advantageous effect on him.”

That wasn’t what I was thinking, Beverly mused.

“He keeps an apartment in Whitechapel,” he told her, “An unfortunate place. I daresay he’s taken up residence in Dr. Lecter’s home these days…”

He trailed off and then added, “But that’s none of my business.”

Graham followed Dr. Lecter into his laboratory as soon as the guests had left and the servants were busy packaging up the leftover food.

“I hope you realize that I will take revenge on you for what you did to my body while I was away.”

“I’d be disappointed if you didn’t,” Lecter remarked.

Graham picked up the leather strap and walked up behind him. With quick movements, he wrapped the strap around Lecter’s throat and pulled it tight. The doctor choked and grasped at it. Graham pulled him against his chest and whispered in his ear.

“You are more dual-natured than I am,” he growled, “Cruelty and a desire for cruelty to be inflicted upon you. Well far be it from me to withhold that from you.”

He kneed the doctor in the back of the leg and let him fall to the ground.

“What would stop me from killing you right now?” he said, pulling up on the straps and strangling him.

“You don’t exist… without me…” Lecter croaked.

“I could steal the recipe for that serum of yours.”

Lecter tapped his temple.

“Up… here…”

Graham loosened his grip and Lecter coughed, laughing.

“At the very least,” Graham snarled, pushing him down on all fours and holding the strap like a leash. “I am going to fuck you bloody.”

“Good,” Lecter replied, his breath ragged.

The next day, Beverly traveled to Whitechapel and found Will Graham’s apartment. It was a sad, dilapidated building with carpeted stairs that sagged in the middle. She slid up to his door, pulled a pin from her hat, and picked the lock.

The interior was dark and contained very little in the way of furnishings. She could see that the man who lived here must have been very poor.

Not poor any longer, are you Mr. Graham? She thought.

A small desk sat in the corner of the main room, littered with scribbled-upon papers. She rifled through them until she found a document detailing a contract between Dr. Hannibal Lecter and Will Graham.

Test subject in the study of behavioral modification. The subject, Mr. Will Graham, will be given a series of medications. During the study, the subject is to report to Dr. Lecter any and all activities or changes in behavior that occur.

“Behavioral modification,” Beverly whispered. She thought of the change she saw in Will Graham the night before. “Has Dr. Lecter really found such a medication?”

She stepped away and bumped her leg against a waste bin beside the desk. A crumpled bit of newspaper lay inside. She picked it out of the bin and unfolded it on the desk.

Woman Found Slaughtered in London Factory.

The article had been carefully clipped and trimmed and then subsequently crumpled and discarded.

“Bizarre,” she said, balling it up and throwing it back in the bin.

Chapter 5

“I've done my research on you,” Frederick Chilton remarked as he and Beverly strolled in the park together.

“Have you?” Beverly asked with a quaint smile.

“You are a private investigator,” he answered, patting her hand on his arm. “Quite well-established I’m told.”

“Guilty as charged,” Beverly admitted.

“I can’t imagine that I am your target, so I have to assume it is Dr. Lecter.”

“Neither,” Beverly corrected. “I am looking into Mr. Graham.”

Chilton’s face grew serious. He walked in silence for a few moments then said, “I wonder about him. I saw him the other day emerging from a gaming house. He was being forcibly removed. I am guessing his luck went sour. He had a lady on his arm… she looked of ill repute.”

Beverly narrowed her eyes and looked ahead. Her accounts of Will Graham were terribly conflicting.

“I do not know why Dr. Lecter patronizes such a man.”

“It has been my understanding that Dr. Lecter is researching behavioral modification. Perhaps he thinks he can change Mr. Graham for the better.”

Chilton looked at her in surprise.

“No one really changes, Miss Katz; especially not villains and cads.”

“Dr. Lecter is an optimist.”

“I believe I will have to ask Dr. Lecter about his involvement with Mr. Graham once and for all,” Chilton decided. “I would hate to see his reputation tarnished by association.”

“Grant me the favor of not mentioning my name,” Beverly requested.

“I know you keep your relationship with Mr. Graham close to the vest,” Chilton said, sipping tea in Dr. Lecter’s study. The doctor sat with his legs crossed, eyeing his solicitor coldly. “But I feel it is my duty to inform you that the man has been seen engaging in most ungentlemanly behavior. It would grieve me greatly if his actions were to shine an ill light on yourself.”

“I thank you for your concern, Frederick, but my private affairs are my own.”

“Of course!” Chilton replied. “I only mean to alert you to the existence of certain rumors.”

“What ‘certain rumors’?” Lecter asked, leaning forward.

“Only that some wretched gossip, which I’m sure, is groundless…”

“By God, Chilton, what are you referring to?”

Chilton sighed and continued, “That you and Mr. Graham are having an affair and that is the basis for your seemingly limitless patience with him.”

Lecter glanced upward and Chilton heard a low chuckle behind him. He spun around to see Graham leaning against the door jamb, arms crossed and an amused smirk on his face.

“By rumors and gossip,” Graham drawled, “You are of course referring to your own vainglorious whispers.”

“How dare you!” Chilton said, standing up. “And this is a private conversation.”

“Anything you say to Dr. Lecter can be said to me.”

“You are not fit to be in his company,” Chilton spat. “I know where you come from. You are trash. I don’t know how you’ve managed to secure this propitious arrangement for yourself, but I won’t kowtow to you.”

Chilton glanced at Dr. Lecter out of the corner of his eye, concerned that his outburst may have angered him, but the doctor only watched with eyes gleaming. Graham moved closer to Chilton, his smug grin static on his face.

“Your opinion is most appreciated, Chilton,” Dr. Lecter said as he stood. “Now, if you’ll excuse us, I would like to speak to Mr. Graham alone. Thank you.”

Chilton nodded at Dr. Lecter and shot Mr. Graham a glare while he left the office.

Beverly found Jack Crawford in the factory district once more. The police were holding back the crowd and she knew that another body had been found. When she locked eyes with Jack, he stared at her with a shocked and confused expression on his face. She saw him struggle for words in a way she had never known him to before.

“Beverly,” he gasped, putting his hand over his mouth.

“Worse than before, Jack?” she asked, putting her hand on his arm.

“The same as before,” he said. He grasped her hand and looked away before turning to her and whispering. “It’s Frederick Chilton, Beverly.”

Beverly stepped back and stared at the building. Only yesterday she was talking to Chilton in the park, discussing the issue of Dr. Lecter.

“Jack,” she replied. “I think our cases are overlapping.”

“Why are they overlapping?”

“I think the monster you are looking for may be the very one I’m investigating: Mr. Graham!”

It was late in the afternoon when Jack Crawford found his way to Dr. Lecter's door, where he was at once admitted by the butler and brought to his office. It was the first time that the Chief Inspector had been received in that part of his friend's quarters; and he eyed the immaculately decorated room with curiosity. At the further end, a flight of stairs mounted to a door covered with red baize; and through this, Crawford was at last received into the doctor's private study. It was a large room fitted round with glass presses, and furnished with a cheval-glass and a business table. It looked out upon the court by three French windows.

A fire burned in the grate and Dr. Lecter sat in his armchair with a truly somber expression on his face. He didn’t rise to meet his visitor, but held out a hand and bade him welcome.

As soon as the butler had left them Crawford said, "You have heard the news?"

The doctor shuddered.

"They were crying it in the square," he said. "I heard them in my dining-room."

"One word," said Jack. "You are my friend, and I want to know what I am doing. You have not been mad enough to hide this Mr. Graham?"

"Jack, I swear to God," cried the doctor, "I swear to God. I will never set eyes on him again. I bind my honor to you that I am done with him in this world. And indeed he does not want my help.”

“Would you offer it if he did?”

You do not know him as I do. He is safe, he is quite safe. This has all been a misunderstanding."

Jack listened gloomily. He did not like his friend's manic speech.

"You seem pretty sure of him," he said, "And for your sake, I hope you are right. If it comes to a trial, your name might appear."

"I am quite sure of him," replied Lecter, "I have grounds for certainty that I cannot share with anyone.”

Jack raised an eyebrow but didn't press him.

"Anyway, he is gone, to where I do not know," Lecter continued.

"You will inform me if you hear from him?"

"Yes, Jack," Lecter answered. "I would not harbor him."

Jack met up with Beverly once more and told her of his meeting with the doctor.

"He maintains Graham's innocence," he explained. "But I fear that he is hiding something. This whole case is so exceptionally strange."

Beverly didn't mention the behavioral modification medication. She didn't know how it all tied together. Perhaps Lecter was so convinced that his medication could cure violent tendencies that he couldn't believe that his chosen test subject was still capable of committing such crimes.

She remembered the words of the contract: "During the study, the subject is to report to Dr. Lecter any and all activities or changes in behavior that occur."

I must find those reports, Beverly thought.

Chapter 6

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes

Beverly waited a short distance away from Dr. Lecter's home until he left the building. Then she walked around to the back parallel street, picked the lock to his laboratory, and slipped inside. She eyed the dingy, wide open room with curiosity and gazed round with a distasteful sense of strangeness as she crossed the gaunt and silent theatre. The tables were laden with chemical apparatus, the floor strewn with crates and littered with packing straw, and moonlight fell through the foggy cupola.

She stopped short when she heard a groan. On the far side of the room, a man sat inside of a tall, narrow cage. It was Will Graham. He was wearing simple clothing and his wiry glasses.

"Miss Katz?" he asked in a small voice of disbelief. He stood up.

Beverly approached him, eyes darting over the cage.

"Mr. Graham," she stated.

"Will," he corrected. He looked frightened and weak. She realized that this was the Will Graham she had met at the first dinner party.

"What has happened to you?" she asked.

Will shuddered and replied, "Dr. Lecter is keeping me prisoner. He only lets the other one out of this cage."

"The other one?"

"Mr. Graham," he answered.

"I don't understand."

"He is forcing me to take a serum. It changes me into someone else. The things it makes me do, Miss Katz, they are horrific."

"Why does he change you in such a negative way?"

Will pushed his glasses up his nose.

"Because it excites him. I do the things that he cannot do. He will never release me. Mr. Graham brings him too much pleasure."

Beverly couldn't believe what she was hearing. Could such a thing be possible? Could Dr. Lecter really be so mad?

Will began shaking and he cried out as he clutched his head.

“I can’t overpower him,” he said. “Please, bring me the salts from the table.”

Beverly turned around and spied a container of colorful salts. She went to get it, but heard the sound of a key turning in the door.

“He’s coming!” Will hissed.

Beverly darted behind the table and crouched down. She watched as Dr. Hannibal Lecter entered the room, turned on the lights, and walked up to Will in his cage.

“Don’t look so distraught, my friend,” the doctor droned. “I’m doing what I can to clean up the mess you made.”

“This is your mess!” Will insisted.

“I think not, Will,” Lecter replied. “And I do not like your accusing tongue. Take some responsibility for your actions.”

“You did this to me,” Will moaned, holding his head.

“It’s a daily struggle for you, isn't it?” Lecter asked, “Fighting back your baser self? There is a part of you that just wants to give in and enjoy the pleasures of being wicked.”

“The part that fights is what makes us human,” Will said. “It’s the constant battle of the soul.”

Dr. Lecter readied the syringe. Will shook his head and shrunk back into the cage.

“As much as I enjoy your persistent sense of shame,” Lecter told him, “I am ready to speak to your better half.”

“No, no,” Will pleaded. “Not right now. I am so tired.”

“You won’t be tired,” Lecter urged, reaching in and grabbing his arm. “You will feel strong in but a moment.”

He wrestled with Will and stuck the syringe into his arm. Will shouted and doubled over. He tried to battle it, but the veins in his arm swelled and pumped into him. His vision began to blur.

“Run Beverly!” he shouted suddenly. “Just run!”

Lecter opened up the cage door and looked around the room. Beverly crouched lower, but when Will went silent she peered around the edge.

Graham sauntered out of the cage and whipped off his glasses, tossing them on the table. He smoothed back his hair and raised an eyebrow to Dr. Lecter.

“We have company,” he said.

Beverly covered her mouth with her hand as Will made his way toward her. She bolted upright and ran for the door, but he darted so quickly and grabbed her by the arm, swinging her into himself.

“We meet again, Miss Katz,” he purred, pressing his body up against her. He ran his fingers through her hair and down over her chest, squeezing her breast in his hand.

“What are you?” she shrieked.

“I am man at his most perfect. I am elevated beyond the tedious trappings of morality and religion and social conscientiousness. I am the pure hedonist, the pure humanist.”

As he spoke he moved his lips over her face and then dragged his tongue along her jaw-line. Then he kissed her hard on the mouth, biting her lip.

Beverly slapped him and he looked away for a moment but then turned his face back toward her, his eyes on fire. A toothy smile erupted over his face.

“Good,” he said. “Fight back. It will make it all the more enjoyable for me.”

Beverly twisted around in his arms so that her back faced him. He clutched at her, beginning to lift up her skirt. She brought up her boot and jammed it down hard into his instep. Graham snarled in pain and she ran forward toward the table. He snatched at her arm just as she reached forward and grabbed a pot of the salt. As he pulled her back toward him she flung her hand around and dashed the salt into his face.

Graham let go of her and rubbed eyes, growling as it stung them. Then he let out a tremendous cry as he stumbled backward. He bent over and began to spasm. Beverly couldn't look away. The man straightened back up again, eyes weary, trying to catch his breath.

“Beverly…” he whispered. She stared at him, unmoving. Will’s eyes widened.

Beverly moved to the side just as Dr. Lecter picked up a syringe. Will put his head down and lunged at the doctor, butting him in the chest. The syringe fell out of his hand. Will knocked him to the ground and began to punch him in the face. Lecter spat blood at him and wrapped his hands around his throat.

Beverly fumbled in her purse and pulled out her small handgun. She pointed it at the men grappling on the floor. Lecter kneed Will in the groin and flipped him over, straddling him and choking him. He looked over and saw Beverly holding the gun.

“He killed all of those people, Miss Katz!” Lecter shouted, pushing his thumbs against Will’s jugular. The young man’s face turned deep red and his eyes were rolling back. “He killed Frederick Chilton!”

Beverly looked down at the man on the floor, and then back up at Dr. Lecter.

“I tried to protect him,” Lecter continued. “I tried to change him. He can’t be changed.”

Beverly gritted her teeth and aimed the gun at Dr. Lecter.

“Wait!” he called out.

She pulled the trigger, and he flew backward off of Will and landed on the floor of the laboratory. He twitched and clutched at his chest.

Beverly ran toward Will who was gasping for air and holding his throat. She lifted him up.

“Why did you shoot him…” he croaked, “… and not me?”

She lifted his face in her hands and stared into his eyes.

“What you said about the soul,” she whispered. “That sounded like the Will I met.”

“Where is Will Graham now?” Jack Crawford asked, walking alongside Beverly.

“I do not know,” she answered. “It pains me to think that I may never see him again.”

Jack breathed in the air and stared upward at the sky.

“It is probably better if none of us do,” he said.

Beverly grew quiet and watched the people of London pass in front of her, going about their daily business.

“I still can’t believe what you have told me about Dr. Lecter." Jack continued. "How could he be so different from what he appeared?”

She held herself closer to Jack’s bent arm, clutching it with gloved hands.

“I’ve learned to recognize the thorough and primitive duality of man,” she said.

“Truly,” Jack replied.

“It is in all of us, Jack,” Beverly went on. “The best of us will always fight. It’s the fight that makes us worthwhile. We sharpen our nobler facets on the whetstones of our baser instincts and emerge all the better for it. That is the balance of the soul.”

Chapter End Notes

Thank you so much for reading! Stay tuned for the next story in the Hannibal Gothic Tales series: Graham; The Modern Prometheus!

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